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ABSTRACT

In a resolution, the Committee of Ministers recommended that governments of Council of Europe member states ask their countries' school authorities to use the school career and health record for children attending school abroad for a trial period and inform the Council of Europe Secretariat at the end of the trial period of their experience in using the record and of any changes to its contents which they considered necessary or desirable. This preliminary report covers the experience of various member countries in the use of the record. The report is based on information obtained from replies to the questionnaire sent to the national education authorities on the use of the school career record, the provisional report prepared for the Commission of the European Communities on the same subject with regard to the Community countries and from members of Project Group Number 7 on the education and cultural development of migrants. This preliminary report mainly concerns the introduction of the record in the various countries concerned. The report contains a description of Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland's experience in the use of the record; a comparative analysis of that experience; a preliminary overall assessment; and provisional conclusions and prospects. (CM)

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg 9 October 1981

DECS/EGT (81) 49

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Evaluation of the school career and health record for children attending school abroad

PART 1

NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE USE OF THE SCHOOL CAREER AND HEALTH RECORD

Preliminary report
for the Council of Europe

by

Michelle HUART

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INTRODUCTION

In Resolution (76) 12 the Committee of Ministers recommended that governments of Council of Europe member states:

- ask their countries' school authorities to use the school career and health record for children attending school abroad for a trial period;

- inform the Council of Europe Secretariat at the end of the trial period of their experience in using the record and of any changes to its contents which they considered necessary or desirable. The trial period was to end on 31 July 1982.

Objectives

With a view to revising the school career and health record - which the Committee of Ministers asked the CDCC to do in co-operation with the Steering Committee for Intra-European Migration (CDMG) and the Commission of the European Communities - the CDCC decided to make an evaluation of the use made of this record.

This preliminary report represents the first stage in that work: it covers the experience of various member countries in the use of the record.

Sources

The information on which the report is based comes from a number of sources, viz:

1. replies to the questionnaire sent by the CDCC to national education authorities on the use of the school career record (cf Appendix I.A);

2. the provisional report prepared for the Commission of the European Communities on the same subject with regard to the Community countries (cf Appendix II);

3. further information supplied by members of the CDCC's Project Group No.7 on the education and cultural development of migrants, at a meeting where they studied the subject (27 February 1981).

Scope of the report

The survey of national educational authorities was planned to be conducted in two stages (cf Appendix I); this preliminary report mainly concerns the introduction of the record in the various countries concerned:

- extent and progress of national trials;

- arrangements for introduction, presentation, supply and forwarding of the record;

- problems arising from the above.

- Questions relating more particularly to the content of the school career and health record and its use by educational personnel responsible for completing it or deriving from the completed questionnaires from foreign countries will be dealt with more fully in the second report. They will be touched upon here only in so far as information is given in the national reports and in connection with the problems of introduction here analysed.

- We shall not dwell here on the particular features of the educational system in each of the countries concerned, since this information is provided much more fully elsewhere than it could be here. We shall mention only certain features of particular relevance to our report.

Structure of the report

This report is set out as follows:

- description of some countries' experience (non-Community countries),

- comparative analysis of that experience,

- preliminary overall assessment,

- provisional conclusions.

Appendices (second part of doc. DECS/EGT (81) 50):

1. questionnaires sent to national authorities by the Secretariat of the Council of Europe

2. request by the Secretariat of the Council of Europe to member states for additional information

3. report prepared for the Commission of the European Communities

1. DESCRIPTION OF EXPERIENCE IN SOME COUNTRIES

(non-Community countries)

Of the 14 states (1) which were sent the Council of Europe questionnaire five had still not replied several weeks after the deadline. These were Greece, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Spain and Turkey.

Replies had been received from Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland.

However, since some of the countries' replies consisted of comments rather than specific answers to the points of the questionnaire, we shall deal here with only some of the instances mentioned; particulars of the other replies will be covered in the other sections of this report.

1.1 AUSTRIA

At the time of the survey, the record had not yet been tried out for migrants' children, because no comparable document exists for Austrian schoolchildren. Indeed, Austria had entered a reservation when Resolution (76) 12 was adopted.

1.2 CYPRUS

For various reasons which will be explained below and despite their initial intention to do so, the Cypriot authorities have not yet, even experimentally, introduced the school career and health record. However, they say that they are prepared to review the possibility of doing so in the light of information gathered on other countries' experience.

1.3 FINLAND (signatory of the European Cultural Convention)

The Council of Europe school career and health record has not been used in Finland for the following reason:

- preparation for the use of the record during the trial period were to be made in close co-operation between Finland and Sweden. As Sweden does not use the record and has no intention of using it in the future, the Finnish authorities have preferred not to take any unilateral decision on the subject.

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(1) Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Holy See (for information), Iceland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey.

1.4 MALTA

The school career and health record for children attending school abroad, as published by the Council of Europe, has hardly been used in Malta for the following reasons:

- the movement of children to and from Council of Europe countries is very limited since there is very little emigration to, or immigration from, them. The movement is confined to children whose parents are posted abroad or hold study scholarships.

- Malta's state schools use a standard form of permanent school record book. This system was introducted in 1970. It is also given to the parents when their children accompany them abroad, whether to Council of Europe member states or elsewhere.

1.1 The record books have been printed by the Department of Education and distributed by its guidance services.

1.2 Copies of the council of Europe record book have been distributed to all state schools (primary and scondary schools, commercial and technical colleges.

1.4 The record is issued in English, which is one of Malta's official languages. No change has been made to its form or content.

1.5 Schools have been informed about the use of the record by means of a Department of Education circular. Its use has also been explained to guidance teachers at their periodical meetings. Schools requiring further advice and assistance can apply to the guidance services of the Department of Education.

1.6.1 There are very few children from abroad, including children from Council of Europe countries, in Malta.

1.6.2 Some 30 children have left Malta with the record. Many of them have accompanied their parents who have been posted abroad or recieved scholarships to study abroad.

1.7 The completed records are handed to parents by school headteachers. The school in the country of destination is informed by means of a covering letter that further information can be supplied on request.

1.5 NORWAY

1. The Norwegian trial period began in October 1979 and was organised by the Basic School Council, which is responsible under the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Education, for matters relating to the nine years of compulsory schooling.

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2. The record has been printed and the relevant instructions photocopied: 500 copies in one Norwegian language, 300 in the other.

3. The record and instructions have been circulated to Directors of Education (regional level) accompanied by a circular asking them to publicise the record. An information circular has also been sent to all municipal education authorities and to all compulsory schools.

4. The record has been produced in Norwegian languages only, with no changes from the basic text.

5. Information and advice may be sought at different levels in the school system: school headteachers (local level), directors of education (regional level) Basic School Council (central level).

6. No precise information is available about children entering or leaving the country with the school record. Only a few requests have been received at central level.

7. The record is given to parents to pass on to the school authorities in their countries of destination.

1.6 PORTUGAL

1. The record is printed and distributed by the publications service in the Secretariat General of the Ministry of Education and Science.

2. The operation started in the first quarter of 1981 with 13,000 copies of the record book.

3. Interested educational establishments may obtain the record on request from the seven directorates general (covering elementary education, secondary education, private and co-operative education) under whose control they come.

4. The record is produced in Portuguese with spaces for translation into the language of the country of destination. The Portuguese version shows no change to either the form or content of the record.

5. Each copy of the Portuguese version distributed is accompanied by an explanation of how to use it.

6. The relevant Portuguese authorities know of less than 15 cases of children who have returned to the country with such a record.

1.7 SWITZERLAND

The school career and health record has not been introduced in the schools and there are no plans to introduce it in the future. However, copies of it may be obtained by anyone interested from the Secretariat of the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Public Education (CDIP).

At the time of completing the questionnaire, the national authorities had received no such requests.

2. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL TRIALS

2.1 Field of application of the resolution

According to information supplied at the end of the first quarter of 1981, concerning only 16 of the 23 Council of Europe countries (the nine member countries of the Community in 1980 and the seven countries mentioned in the first part of this report), it appears that of the 22 countries concerned (the Holy See having no school system of its own) only 11 have conducted a genuine trial, that is to say: have introduced the school career and health record and circulated information about the possibility - and is some cases desirability - of using it for children about to attend school abroad, with the mobilisation of the schools administration which such a trial inevitably entails.

Of these countries, three may be regarded as emigration countries: Italy, Malta and Portugal; and eight as immigration countries: Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Netherlands and Luxembourg.

2.2 Organisation of the trials

We shall deal for the moment only with these 11 cases, leaving an analysis of certain countries' reasons for not conducting trials to a later section.

2.2.1 Date of introduction

The 11 countries began to introduce the record, whether experimentally or otherwise, over a period of little more than three years: from the end of 1977 to the beginning of 1981, viz:

1977	Italy, Luxembourg
1978	France
1979	Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, Norway, United Kingdom
1980	Federal Republic of Germany
1981	Portugal

(unspecified: Malta)

These dates are rather late in relation to the date (1976) when the resolution advocating the introduction and trial of the record was adopted.

To explain at least some of these delays, it must be said that organising the trials was bound to take a certain amount of time - depending on the extent of the trial, the degree of centralisation and hierarchical organisation of the school systems, the arrangements for supplying the records, and the accompanying machinery.

2.2.2 Organising agencies

Whatever the geographical extent of, and arrangements for, the trials (cf following sections) the decisions on the introduction of the record and the procedures to be followed were obviously determined at national level. The organising agencies naturally vary from one country to another depending on the internal structure of their education systems but in all cases - even where there is more than one system within the country (Belgium cf EEC Report doc. DECS/EGT (81) .. Appendix 3, page 2) or more or less autonomous regional systems (FRG cf EEC report Appendix 3, page 6), the decisions were reached upstream of these various sub-systems, or at the level where they converge at a central point from the point of view of the state with responsibility vis-a-vis those sub-systems: education ministry or ministerial body in most cases, the national body specifically responsible for questions concerning migrant workers' children (FRG).

2.2.3 Extent of national trials

The extent of each of the national trials may be measured by three types of indicator: geographical area, the school population covered and the number of copies planned or actually printed.

With regard to geographical area, the various national trials reported fall into two main categories: those which were deliberately limited in space (particular administrative regions or school districts) and those which were nationwide from the outset.

The first category includes Belgium, FRG, United Kingdom and Ireland, all immigration countries. The areas chosen seem to have been selected for their high proportion of foreign pupils at least potentially concerned; the other countries designated no particular zone for preferential treatment.

On this basis alone it is difficult to assess the importance attached to the school career and health record by the various authorities involved. The most that can be assumed is that where the record is made generally available, this may mean that there is an intention to continue using the record beyond the trial period and that the instrument may already be regarded as to some extent reliable.

The school population covered seems generally to be primarily pupils in compulsory public education. However, some of the trials went further and sought to reach all schoolchildren in need of the record, whatever schools they might be attending.

The number of records printed by the various national or regional services responsible for doing so was not systematically reported. For example, in almost half of the cases (five out of eleven) - Malta, United Kingdom, FRG, Ireland, Luxembourg - including three of the four countries which chose a geographically limited trial - we do not know how many copies were printed and distributed. In the other cases, the number varies (not taking into account the various languages used) from several hundreds to several hundred thousand:

- Norway 800 - general availability
- Belgium 1,300 - limited availability
- Italy 10,000 - general availability
- Portugal 13,000 - " "
- Netherlands 45,000 - " "
- France 400,000 - " "

The figures naturally have to be related to other data: total pupil numbers, emigration or family reunion rates for Italy and Portugal in particular, numbers of foreigners in the immigration countries and hence the number of foreign children attending school, estimates of intra-European or wider international mobility, estimates of returns to immigrants' home countries ... and have first to be interpreted in the light of those data. Unfortunately, we do not possess all these figures; some - eg for movement from one country to another - are nowhere reliably available. However, the absolute numbers of copies do enable us to assess - rather than measure the scope which the various national authorities deliberately chose to give to this scheme and hence to assess to some extent the caution with which those countries approached the experiment and perhaps the faith they placed in this innovation.

2.2.4 Machinery set up

2.2.4.1 Presentation of the record

In all cases, whether produced nationally or regionally, the school career and health record was always printed in the national language or languages; in the latter case, there were separate sets for distribution in different geographical areas: in Belgium, for instance, 1,000 copies were produced in Dutch and 300 in French, according to the trial areas, and in Norway 500 were printed in one of the country's languages and 300 in the other.

It may be noted, however, that in four countries, which are all immigration countries, bilingual versions or specimen versions in other languages have been produced or are planned: France, United Kingdom, FRG and Netherlands. These records produced wholly or partly in foreign languages are either reference copies (France) or copies to be reproduced by the establishment that needs them (United Kingdom) or again, as in the Netherlands, copies made directly available to all potential users.

The overall content and the various headings have not been substantially changed and the graphical presentation itself seems to have remained identical with the model proposed by the Council of Europe; this seems to suggest, though this is not specified in member states' replies, that spaces are provided for translation into the language of the destination country for cases where no bilingual version exists.

However, translation problems could arise, subsequently causing problems of interpretation. We noted at least one example in part B concerning the pupil's personal characteristics, as assessed in the last school attended. Comparing the English and French versions ("original" versions, since these are the Council of Europe's working languages) and the Portuguese version, we may well ask whether they all really reflect the same ideas, since there are slight but clear divergencies (1).

In most cases, the second part of the record, dealing with health particulars, which was intended to be detachable, seems not to have been altered either.

Most national authorities' replies also mention that the record, whatever its form, is generally accompanied by the instructions needed to understand and use it properly. Such instructions are always in the language or languages of the country concerned.

2.2.4.2 Organisation of the record's introduction

In all European school systems, between the central body wielding educational authority and the school establishments themselves there are always a number of authorities with varying administrative and pedagogical powers and various degrees of command; and all these levels are involved to varying extents in these trials. Yet there are some differences:

- out of the 11 trials undertaken, while the decision to carry out the trial was always taken by the central authority, in two cases the trial was actually conducted (in the cases where the experiment was geographically limited) at one or more regional levels (Belgium, FRG) whilst in the other cases (also including two geographically limited trials) this was done by the central body.

- at the other end of the chain there are also differences: schools are not systematically issued with the record in all countries: they are in Belgium, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Malta; elsewhere, as far as information is available, they have to ask the central or other body which holds them, sometimes via specified channels.

(1) "Comportamento" in Portuguese verses "ordre, soin" in French/"tidiness, carefulness" in English.

- between these two extremes, the organisation scenario varies somewhat: in virtually all cases, the body conducting the trial distributed an accompanying circular informing the lower echelons about the trial: instructions on how to use the record in most cases but also, in a smaller number of cases, circulars encouraging them to use it, even going so far as to urge them to inform potential users about it or requesting return information about the instrument itself, its validity and its use. However, this accompanying material is by no means always supplied to all levels in the hierarchy and only very rarely is it aimed at the main users, the schools themselves. Consequently, it may be feared that the information needed for its effective use will not find its mark. Nevertheless, we may note two initiatives which seem interesting in this respect: in the Netherlands, mention was made of the existence and availability of the school career and health record, its role and mode of use, and in Malta, in addition to a circular to schools, explanations were also given to guidance teachers at their information meetings.

2.2.4.3 Arrangements for forwarding the record to the pupil's new school

The way in which the record is passed on to the persons principally concerned, ie the child's future teachers, who thanks to this record should be able to fit the child better into their own system,

- is not uniform in all countries:

  . in two cases (France and Italy) diplomatic channels are used;

  . in all other cases it seems to be passed on via the parents;

- raises and reveals a number of problems:

  . the record never seems to be handed on systematically (and with good reason: it is only to be supplied to "leavers"); in virtually all cases it has to be requested by the parents. However, it seems that the parents are not well-informed about the possibility of using this instrument and of how useful it can be for their child's education;

  . the use of diplomatic channels may seem slow and cumbersome; it implies that the parents either know in advance where their child will be attending school, or that they subsequently inform the diplomatic or administrative authorities holding their child's record. Furthermore, this procedure may also raise the problem of knowledge falling into the hands of the administration and which the parents consider private or for school use only. They might sometimes not know about it themselves and hence they might disagree with it;

  . privacy of information is also the reason invoked by some countries for forwarding separately the health particulars contained in the second part of the record.

2.2.5 Evaluation of the trial by the national authorities

It seems that, with few exceptions, the various national or regional authorities conducting the trials did not at the same time set up a system for monitoring the actual use of the school career and health record. Only Belgium and Ireland provided, from the outset, for information feedback, so that the actual use and validity of this instrument could be assessed. The trials mounted most recently naturally cannot yet have been subjected to very precise internal evaluation.

However, in virtually all cases there may be ways of identifying the users, and surveys or specific studies are either in progress or potentially feasible. The final report of the Commission of the European Community on this subject should be able to take these into account where the Community countries are concerned.

Furthermore, where the CDCC member states not yet covered by the Commission's survey are concerned, a second questionnaire intended for teachers (cf Appendix 2) and the most recent enquiry (Appendix 2) sent to the relevant national authorities by the Secretariat of the Council of Europe should enable these evaluations to be refined.

2.2.6 Degree of utilisation

According to the information available, it seems that for the time being none of the countries concerned is in possession of precise, accurate figures for the total number of school career and health records actually in use, in either direction, that is to say to or from any Council of Europe member state. However, even if, for some countries - generally speaking those in which the record has been introduced recently - no information is available that does not mean that the record is not being used, that no movement of schoolchildren accompanied by this instrument is taking place and other countries, without being able to supply exhaustive figures, have been able to give some indication of the extent of the use made of it. For instance, with regard to departures, Belgium reports five to Spain, Turkey and North Africa; Malta reports about thirty; the Netherlands report numerous enquiries reaching the Ministry of Education; registration of these enquiries is one way of identifying actual users and hence of finding out more about information circuits and destinations. In Norway, known enquiries, though there are few, show that the system can work, and in France also schools are known to have applied to their local inspectorates for records.

Even less is known about arrivals in the schools in the countries in question of records from other member states and hence the use that is made of them by the school authorities and teachers, and the opinion of teachers on the real value of the information supplied to them in this way. In this field, more precise particulars ought to be available for the second stage of this study (second report - final report).

2.2.7 Validity - reliability

As far as it is possible to tell from present information from the various trial countries, which is not always explicit on these points, the school career and health record seems to have been regarded as a valid and useful instrument for the purposes for which it is intended, since in all cases it has been reproduced according to the proposed "model".

However, some comment is called for regarding the school career part and the part covering health information. For instance, in the first part, the Portuguese authorities now propose certain additions (1) if ever the record is revised; the Norwegian authorities stress that they have difficulty in describing school work in the record terms because their own system is different; on the other hand, they find the health section most useful. This opinion seems to be shared by other countries, which also suggest certain improvements (2) or suggest that certain confidential information ought to be forwarded separately; this is not a restriction, but rather emphasises the care with which such information is treated.

Of course, this information is still very incomplete and will be refined by means of the replies to the supplementary inquiries already mentioned (cf Appendix 1B and 3) and this part will be dealt with more thoroughly in the final report.

3. INITIAL ASSESSMENT

The very little use which appears to be made of the record according to the particulars quoted above and which even those figures certainly make appear even less than it is in reality (since all the trials have taken place relatively recently and there has not been systematic monitoring) should not necessarily give a negative image of those trials, nor of the instrument itself or the national authorities' intention of using it.

However, it may, as may also the failure of certain countries to conduct the trial advocated in Resolution (76) 12, reflect a number of problems, more apparent in some countries than in others, which are raised by the school career and health record and its use as a means of passing on necessary information to teachers in the new school system to which a child is transferring.

These problems may be dealt with under three headings: problems related to the use as such of an instrument of this kind, problems relating to the validity and reliability of this particular instrument, and problems concerning the machinery required to make its operation efficient.

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(1) Portuguese proposals:

p. 4 Add handicraft to other psycho-motor activities.

p. 6 Use the ILO classification for occupations.

(2) Cf Portuguese proposals.

3.1 As regards the principle of using such a school career and health record, the positions of the various countries (whether or not they have conducted any trial with it) prompt a number of comments:

- firstly, the fact that some member states preferred to conduct the trial on a limited geographical basis probably ought not to be regarded as indicating any reluctance on their part. On the contrary, it may indicate a desire to obtain a clear picture of the instrument's use and its organisational implications.

Similarly, although some countries refused or were reluctant to embark on the trial recommended in Resolution (76) 12, the Danish authorities for instance, indicate clearly that although the record has not yet been introduced in their country, even experimentally, the results of trials in other countries may prompt them to review their position and perhaps put the record into circulation. Note also that Sweden regards use of the record as optional.

Generally speaking, there were three reasons for not making the experiment:

- little migration to or from the member state concerned (Sweden), sometimes combined with the existence of a similar instrument which is readily obtained and can serve the same purpose abroad (Cyprus);

- complete or partial unsuitability of the instrument (Sweden, Norway);

- non-existence, in the member state of an instrument serving the same purpose for "national" school children (Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark).

It remains to be seen whether reasons of this kind will continue to be an obstacle or whether the record's potential usefulness (information rather than assessment) for fitting the children concerned into the various school systems will be sufficiently appreciated for these countries to revise their positions.

It seems quite clear that any such change of heart will also depend on the content and internal organisation of the record itself.

3.2 In fact, the first tentative judgements available on the validity and reliability of the record (cf para. 2.2.7), together with the fact that it was distributed without alteration in the various countries (cf para. 2.2.4.1), are indication enough that there is no unfavourable prejudice as to the outcome of the trials, even though attention is drawn to problematical aspects (Sweden, Norway).

In any event, it is still too early to consider revising the content of the record: the results of the current investigations will provide further information for this purpose.

3.3 As regards machinery, in all cases where trials have actually been mounted, the various national authorities concerned appear to have been mobilised at virtually all levels. Even countries which have not embarked upon any trial indicate that specimen copies are available for consultation or use, usually at parents' request.

However, some areas of difficulty remain: although the administrative authorities have been extensively mobilised in circulating records to potential users (though some modes of distribution involve cumbersome procedures for obtaining the records), the same does not appear to have been the case as regards monitoring the trials, except in some geographically limited operations where monitoring seems to have been just as one would have expected from the concern which prompted the choice of restricted areas.

However, what may be rather a pity from an experimental point of view is probably less so in the case of a measure adopted virtually finally or at least indefinitely.

However, other aspects of the machinery set up need to be examined very carefully, whether from an experimental or from a more long-term point of view. Even very wide distribution resulting in effective availability of such an instrument wherever it may be useful, cannot make the instrument "pay", educationally speaking, without further efforts to provide the various agencies and persons concerned with the information they need, and without refining the arrangements for forwarding the record. These seem to be the two areas where the main problems lie at present, despite the fact that the introduction of the record book was backed up by information through official channels. The main problems to emerge at the present stage of the study are as follows:

- firstly, this official information appears - as is logical - to have reached principally only the actual targets, that is to say, education personnel. Parents, who are very much involved, especially as it is sometimes they who have to apply for the record and even to pass it on - appear to have been less systematically informed, except in rare cases such as Sweden - although there the record has not been distributed in the schools;

- secondly, one important aspect of the information to be supplied to everyone concerned has been largely ignored; that is the "decoding" of records from abroad and the information obtained from them. Some countries have, of course, indicated the possibility of consulting versions of the record produced in languages other than their own or even bilingual versions, or of using appropriate intermediary services, sometimes even interpreters. However, this does not always seem sufficient and in any event the authorities concerned in the member states seem, in organising the use of the school record to have paid much less attention to incoming information

than to outgoing information. Yet it is quite obvious that several partners - always at least two countries - are affected by the use and circulation of such a record.

PROVISIONAL CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

Too little information is available as yet for making specific recommendations. However, a number of avenues to be explored have already been mentioned, based either on the principle stressed by one member state (Sweden) of optional use according to parents' wishes, or on the need to work out adaptable procedures for supplying information; this is all the more necessary because we wish both to ensure that this system of information transfer for educational purposes works and to respect the right of each individual to make up his own mind responsibly whether or not to use such an instrument, which is in any event available to all.

1. The first avenue to be explored clearly concerns the intensification of information supplied to the agencies and persons concerned, covering the existence, usefulness and employment of the record for both incoming and outgoing information.

1.1 Information about incoming records should be aimed mainly at those who have to make educational use of the information transmitted, that is to say, the various persons in the host educational system who have to fit the child into his new school environment and hence need to know as much about him as possible, especially with regard to his past school record. For the purpose of better understanding information about his past school record, other instruments may be made available to teachers who have to "decode" information in the record: the intercultural teacher training dossiers published by the Council of Europe's Council for Cultural Co-operation would make a welcome addition to the information material compiled and circulated by the responsible school authorities.

1.2 Concerning outgoing records, information on the existence, use and "coding" of the records, naturally must be made available to those who have to complete them but also to those who are equally, though differently, concerned: the parents of the pupils in question, so that they realise what the record is for and understand its usefulness.

1.3 Much more than the first kind of information (1.1), this second type ought to be circulated in two directions which complement each other from the point of view of the record's use: to teachers and to parents. Reaching both means passing the information through channels appropriate to each of these two social groups, eg administrative channels, professional bodies, training agencies, educational journals in the case of teachers, migrants' associations, parent-teacher associations, social agencies for the parents.

2.1 The problem of the instrument's acceptance will be much less acute if this information is widely, thoroughly and accurately circulated; but all concerned must feel yet more responsible for this instrument and its use. For this purpose, the parents' signature should be added to the completed record, indicating their agreement with its content and reflecting a personal commitment. Furthermore, a duplicate of each record issued could be stored by the issuing establishment, not for the purpose of filing information, but of authenticating and elaborating on the information transmitted if necessary.

2.2 As regards the actual transmission of the record from one country to another, even though the reasons for sometimes using diplomatic channels may be readily understood, it seems that the most practical, most economical course and the one in which parents may have most confidence would be to have the record passed on by the parents themselves.

3. We should like to end this preliminary report by saying that if the record is to serve its purpose everyone who uses it must believe in its accuracy and its confidential nature. Accuracy can be dealt with technically; we have begun to do so and will go further in the next report, but, like confidentiality, it is also a problem of professional ethics. In several countries, currents of opinion have emerged in recent years rejecting any means whereby individuals are classified permanently - and hence erroneously by any centralised official collection of personal particulars. The procedures for using and transmitting the record must take this into account and nip any such fear in the bud; the role of parents, and hence their participation in this scheme, is accordingly of paramount importance. Furthermore, the precise purpose of the instrument and its use should certainly be more carefully defined and brought to the knowledge of the persons concerned. We have here mainly emphasised the role of the transmission of "technical" information in the record book, which seems to be the function best accepted by everyone, the function of information rather than that of evaluation, of which some countries seem wary, especially those which have no similar instrument for internal use for either foreign or national pupils.